

The failure to invest wisely in sound policies to promote economic growth is particularly problematic in light of the growing competition U.S. workers and firms face as the people of China, India, and other nations rapidly enter the global economy. Significant new intellectual work is needed to identify evidence- and experience-based policies to promote individual opportunity and strengthen America's economy.

The Project will therefore reach across the country to encourage many of the nation's leading thinkers to put forward new proposals and will help bring those ideas to bear on policy debates in a relevant and effective way.

Economic evidence and experience suggest three principles on which the Project's economic strategy is premised:

Broad-based economic growth is stronger and more sustainable: Broad-based growth will be stronger and more sustainable than growth accruing disproportionately to a small segment of the population. When public policy excessively favors relatively few, the economy misses out on opportunities for innovation and productivity by the many.

Economic security and economic growth can be mutually reinforcing: Not only does economic growth increase economic security, but economic security in turn can increase economic growth—by enabling people to take the risks that promote growth (such as starting a new business or investing in their own education), by getting families back on their feet quickly after unexpected shocks, and by lessening calls for growth-diminishing policies like closing our markets to competition.

Effective government can enhance economic growth: Markets are the cornerstone of economic growth, but government must invest in critical needs that market forces will not adequately meet—such as education, infrastructure, and basic research. Government must rigorously seek efficiency, increased productivity, and internal reform so that it can most effectively target its policies to provide necessary services.

To achieve the goal of strong, sustainable, and broad-based economic growth, the Project will identify and advance sound policy ideas that rest upon four pillars:

Education and work: The productive power of the U.S. economy lies heavily with its people. The Project will explore ways to improve education—from prekindergarten through graduate school—to equip America's youth to succeed in the knowledge-based economy; reform the nation's job training and vocational education system; and increase work incentives for low-skilled workers.

Innovation and infrastructure: Innovation fuels growth, creates jobs, and expands economic opportunity. With global economic activity becoming increasingly dependent on technology, the Project will propose ways of making more workers literate in science and engineering; adopting smarter incentives for private firms to undertake R&D and removing barriers to private-sector innovation; increasing the federal commitment to fundamental scientific research; achieving energy independence; and improving our nation's physical infrastructure.

Savings and insurance: The more security that people can achieve in their personal finances—through both savings and social insurance—the more confidence they can place in the future, making them more likely to seize opportunities and bounce back from adverse events. The Project will be examining topics such as shoring up health-care coverage and reducing health-care costs; cushioning the economic shocks of job dislocation; and increasing retirement security—all in an effort to provide people with the eco-

nomomic security they need to be entrepreneurial and invest in their own skills.

Effective government: Government has a limited but essential role in creating the conditions for growth in which all Americans can share. The Project will propose ways to increase government productivity and efficiency; realign government's activities in response to changing circumstances; reform government regulation so that it efficiently guides private firms when necessary without unduly hampering them; and take measures to make the Project's proposals budget-neutral.

FREE INTERNET FILING ACT

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I continue to advocate for the ability of taxpayers to file their taxes directly through the Internal Revenue Service Web site without depending on commercial tax preparers. If a taxpayer has taken the time to fill out their taxes on their own, they should be provided with the opportunity to file electronically through the IRS Web site without exposing their personal financial information to a tax preparer or be subjected to solicitations for other services or tax products. A bill that I introduced with my friend from New Mexico, Senator BINGAMAN, S. 2550, the Free Internet Filing Act, requires that taxpayers be provided with the option to directly e-file via the IRS Web site without using commercial tax preparers. I will continue to work with my colleagues to enact this needed legislation. Electronic returns help taxpayers receive their refunds faster than mailing them in. This would also save the IRS resources and reduce possible errors that can occur when the mailed-in returns are transcribed.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an additional letter of support for S. 2550 from the National Consumer Law Center, Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, U.S. Public Interest Research Group, and Consumer Action be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

APRIL 21, 2006.

Hon. DANIEL K. AKAKA,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR AKAKA: The National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income clients), Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, the U.S. Public Interest Research Group and Consumer Action write to support S. 2550, the "Free Internet Filing Act." Consumer groups have long advocated for what S. 2550 would provide—the ability of taxpayers to electronically file their returns without the need for a third party intermediary.

Enabling taxpayers to file electronically directly with the Internal Revenue Service will benefit taxpayers tremendously. It will save taxpayers the fees charged by some commercial preparers for electronic filing. Unlike the current Free File program established by the IRS, S. 2550 will provide taxpayers with free electronic filing without being subject to cross-marketing pitches for refund anticipation loans, mortgages and other financial products which may not be in their best interests.

S. 2550 will also help taxpayers to keep their information private. By allowing free direct electronic filing with the IRS, taxpayers will have the ability to bypass commercial preparers that might exploit or share their personal, confidential tax information for non-tax purposes.

We believe the IRS should have been required a long time ago to establish free direct electronic filing. For many years, Americans have been able to apply for federal student financial aid on www.fafsa.ed.gov and Social Security retirement benefits at www.ssa.gov. A free direct electronic filing program at www.irs.gov is long overdue.

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Chi Chi Wu. Thank you again for all your efforts to protect taxpayer rights.

Sincerely,

CHI CHI WU,
Staff Attorney, National Consumer Law Center.

JEAN ANN FOX,
Director of Consumer Protection, Consumer Federation of America.

EDMUND MIERZWINSKI,
Consumer Program Director, U.S. Public Interest Research Group.

SUSANNA MONTEZEMOLO,
Policy Analyst, Consumers Union.

LINDA SHERRY,
Director, National Priorities, Consumer Action.

REMEMBERING J.A. TIBERTI

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I pay tribute to a great Nevadan whose passing has saddened me and countless others in my State. I hope my colleagues will join me in offering their thoughts and prayers to the family of J.A. Tiberti.

Mr. Tiberti died yesterday. He had called Nevada home since 1941.

I'm very proud to say J.A. Tiberti was my friend. But he was more than that. J.A. Tiberti was nothing less than a deep personal inspiration. He embodied a bold, energetic, upbeat entrepreneurial spirit. The type of spirit that built Nevada, the West, and this country. The type of spirit that inspires and energizes brave thinkers and dreamers throughout America, and has done so since our Nation was formed.

Mr. Tiberti leaves behind not only one of the most proud and prominent families in Nevada but also a legacy of vision and dreams for his community that will last, literally, for generations.

If you drive anywhere in southern Nevada today, you will see homes, businesses, office buildings, and resorts rising out of the desert and forming the fastest growing communities in America. These are all testaments to the allure of Nevada and the spirit of the people who call it home. And on many of those rising structures you will see the Tiberti name. It is a testament to a man who dedicated his life to helping build his community.